New Technologies in Foreign Language Classroom: the Role of Attitudes

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Abstract

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have changed the way people live, interact with each other, search for information, study, etc. Nowadays, new technologies have become part of the basic knowledge in the society; therefore, it is necessary to help learners develop their digital skills and abilities, in order to prepare them properly for the future challenges. According to the UNESCO, "ICT add value to the process of learning (…)." [1]. The Internet, among others, is a great tool to support language learning, as the use of technologies in the classroom engages students in their learning process and motivate them. Language attitudes are generally considered, by such scholars as Gardner [2], one of the factors that certainly influence (second) language acquisition (SLA), and thus included in several theoretical models of SLA. According to Cenoz, "attitudes can be considered evaluative reactions towards an object and in the case of language learning, they are evaluative reactions towards the activity of learning languages" [3], as such, they can largely condition students' affective and cognitive responses towards different languages, and motivate them for certain behaviour as far as the learning of a language is concerned. Due to these statements, the present study aims at exploring the role of learners' attitudes towards the use of new technologies, such as the Internet, as a basis for a foreign language (FL) classroom learning activities. The methodology of the study is based on the ICT questionnaire by Kennedy et al. [4] and Ipiña [5] and it involves the sample of 27 students of a public post compulsory secondary school in Vitoria-Gasteiz, Basque Country in Spain.

References

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